

GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK

PARK PROFILE

PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT

Goose Creek State Park was established on September 25, 1974, to protect and provide public access to representative examples of the unique biological, geological, scenic, recreational and archaeological resources of the central portion of North Carolina's lower (or outer) Coastal Plain. The park's resources and programs are intended to promote the knowledge, health and happiness of the residents and visitors of this region, both now and in the future.

Representative examples of significant biological resources found in the park include habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker (Picoides borealis) and the following four exemplary natural community types: Tidal Freshwater Marsh, Tidal Cypress-Gum Swamp, Coastal Fringe Evergreen Forest and Estuarine Fringe Loblolly Pine Forest.

The significant geologic resource in the park is the 375-acre registered natural landmark that comprises the longest segment of publicly owned, undeveloped, low-salinity estuarine shoreline in the state and, possibly, in the Southeast. Development and management aims for the park must include the protection and maintenance of this resource as an example of how geologic, topographic and hydrologic forces interact to create a pattern of natural communities. At the same time, the park's essentially wilderness condition is retained.

The park's significant scenic resources provide opportunities to view broad expanses of the Pamlico River and its associated estuarine marsh, water fowl and birds of prey. Archaeologic resources include two 19th-century cemeteries found in the park.

Recreational opportunities at Goose Creek State Park are compatible with one another and with the protection of the park's unique natural resources. They promote family solidarity and provide for the education, health and happiness of park visitors. Nature interpretation activities are emphasized. Properly developed and programmed, the environmental education opportunities at the park are extremely effective in promoting resource stewardship by illustrating the consequences of continued pollution and the destruction of species.

The park's location on the Pamlico River within the Goose Creek/Mallard Creek watershed is strategic for scientific studies of how land-use changes affect water quality in estuarine environments. The park plays an important role by maintaining the rural character of the immediate vicinity.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Wetlands: Wetlands are one of coastal North Carolina's most valuable habitat types. This interpretive theme focuses on the diversity of wetland types and how they evolve; how wetlands function in terms of hydrology and nutrient cycling; plant and animal habitat and how the habitat and animal users change through the seasons; the importance of wetlands to people, especially in terms of water quality and flood and erosion control; and the uniqueness of the combination of fresh water and salt water wetlands in the park.

Diversity of Habitats: This interpretive theme focuses on the large number of community types and successional stages exhibited in the park. It also focuses on the wide array of niches available in such a small area due to the diversity in habitats.

STATISTICS

Visitation (1999)	108,787
Operating Budget (FY 98-99)	\$ 383,887
Revenue (FY 98-99)	\$ 1,426

VISITOR FACILITIES

Primitive camping (12 sites)	Primitive group camping (1 site)
Picnic areas (25 tables) and shelters (2)	6 Hiking trails (7.3 miles total)
Boat/canoe access	River fishing and swimming
Restrooms	Drinking water
Visitor center	Exhibit hall

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION NEEDS

1	The family tent and trailer campground project will construct an access road, handicap walkways, electric and water line extensions, a septic system, a dumpstation, electric hookups, 50 campsites, and an amphitheater.	\$2,214,332
2	The EE center and Mallard Creek trails project consists of construction of the Mallard Creek Trail.	331,179
3	The EE center/messhall/dormitory phase project includes adding site amenities such as landscaping and benches; construction of a dormitory wing, manager's residence and mess hall; roads and parking; utilities; and beds, closets, and kitchen equipment. The park boundary may need to be adjusted to accommodate the proposed facilities.	2,428,513
4	The maintenance area improvements project will construct a flammable storage building, lumber shed, warehouse, vehicular storage with a washpad, underground storage tank conversion, renovate the exterior of the maintenance building and add a shower, and pave the yard.	417,595
5	The Dinah's Landing improvements project scope consists of 4 portajohns with pumpout equipment, a Clevis Multrum toilet, 4 remote camping platforms, and a 16-table shelter. Further investigation is needed prior to going forward with the project.	283,328
6	The wilderness campsites project (land dependent) will construct 8 campsites, improve the gravel road, extend the waterline, and install a Clevis Multrum toilet.	159,373
TOTAL:		<hr/> \$5,834,320

NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK REGISTERED NATURAL HERITAGE AREA

Goose Creek Registered Natural Heritage Area: A 375-acre portion of Goose Creek State Park has been designated by the National Park Service as a National Natural Landmark and by the Natural Heritage Program as a Registered Natural Heritage Area. This landmark includes the longest segment of publicly owned, undeveloped, low-salinity estuarine shoreline in North Carolina and probably in the Southeast. Its varied natural communities, including Tidal Freshwater Marsh (Oligohaline variant), Estuarine Fringe Loblolly Pine Forest (marsh transition), Tidal Cypress-Gum Swamp and Nonriverine Swamp Forest, reflect shoreline response to slowly rising sea levels.

POTENTIAL ADDITIONS TO REGISTERED NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS

Upper Goose Creek: This area contains high quality examples of two significant natural communities. The Tidal Cypress-Gum Swamp grades into Coastal Plain Small Stream Swamp.

West Side of Mouth of Goose Creek: This area is similar to parts of the National Natural Landmark, with high quality Tidal Freshwater Marsh and Estuarine Fringe Loblolly Pine Forest. The area to the west, outside the current park boundaries, is also of high biological significance and may be eligible for registry as a natural area.

Mallard Creek: This area, which was recently added to the park, contains an exemplary Tidal Freshwater Marsh and a variety of other communities. Preliminary examination indicates little disturbance in most of this area (possibly the least disturbed marsh in the park) and a high diversity of both plant and animal species.

FUTURE LAND ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completion of the Goose Creek State Park master plan will require the acquisition of 395 acres. The existing master plan includes a tract in the upper reaches of Goose Creek for a family wilderness campground and a tract along the upper reaches of Mallard Creek to protect the water resources of this stream and associated wetlands. Additional acreage to the east of Mallard Creek should be added to the master plan to protect the wetlands associated with Mallard Creek and to provide better operational control of the access road. To the west of Dinah's Landing, the natural area identified in the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine study should be added to the park's master plan. This area contains elements similar to the existing registered natural area within the park and should be added to that registered natural area.

Master Plan Total Acreage	1,991 acres
Current Park Acreage	<u>1,596 acres</u>
Acquisition Needs	395 acres

2000 STAFF POSITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load	
Park Superintendent II	1	Park Attendant	1	Park Attendant	2
Park Ranger III	1	General Utility Worker	1	Office Assistant II	1
Park Ranger II	1				
Park Ranger I	1				
Maintenance Mechanic II	2				
General Utility Worker	1				
Office Assistant III	2				

PROPOSED STAFF ADDITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load	
Park Ranger III	1	General Utility Worker	1		
		Park Attendant	1		
		Assistant Park Ranger	1		